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FREE INDIA

Founder: E. R. GOVINDAN

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HEALTH SERVICES

Rethinking Essential Says WHO Director

Drastic and fundamental rethinking of the relationships between communities and their health services is necessary if the health requirements of the underserved millions throughout the world are to be met.

This warning is given by Dr Halfdan Mahler, Director-General of the World Health Organization, in his most recent annual report entitled The Work of WHO, 1975.

"We must remind ourselves," Dr. Mahler declares, "that the urgent health problems of developing countries relate to poverty, to infection, to malnutrition and undernutrition, to lack of accessible potable water, and to multiple environmental hazards. Such basic threats to health are unlikely to be countered by conventional health service techniques, however sensitively and intensively they are applied."

In support of this view Dr. Mahler further stresses: (1) that separate programmes, each designed for the control of a specific disease, are not likely to solve the overall health problem, and that it is equally unlikely that the build-up of centralized services based on advanced health technology will effectively meet the overwhelming day to day health requirements of the majority of people living in rural areas; (2) that the medical and health care solutions of the industrial world are often neither practicable nor acceptable for developing countries, because of both cost and inefficiency.

It is precisely for the reasons spelt out by Dr. Mahler that primary health care, as an integral part of national health services, received such strong emphasis in 1975 by the Executive Board of WHO, the Twenty-eighth World Health Assembly and WHO's six Regional Committees.

Millions of people in the developing world—in both rural and urban areas—could benefit from a concept embracing health in its entirety and not restricted to the provision of medical care. From a number of countries of widely different geographical and political make-up, WHO is aware that such an approach can be acceptable and effective.

Dr. Mahler points out that health in rural areas is closely interlinked with social and economic development. Situations, however, vary from region to region and from country to country. For example, in the river blindness areas of West Africa the health component should be the trigger mechanism for development, while in some of the areas suffering from drought and crop failure or clearly unjust land distribution policies, action in other sectors must take priority.

"I have no doubt that such intergated activities are essential to solve this problem and yet I am conscious of the lack of success of many of our previous efforts. Despite these past failures, WHO must voluntarily and forcefully move in this direction for health reasons, but with care and proper thought. We feel confident enough to do so and consider that the climate of world-opinion is now ready for such a move," writes Dr. Mahler.

Words to Remember

[Excerpts from the speeches of the Prime Minister]

Inaugurating the "Hot Strip Mill" at the Bokaro Steel Plant, the Prime Minister said Projects like Bokaro were necessary for laying a solid economic foundation for the country. Some in India and abroad had criticised Jawaharlal Nehru when he thought of having steel plants and other similar big projects They contended that what India needed was simply food and not sophisticated projects.

Despite all this criticism, Nehru went ahead with these projects and time had proved him right beyond doubt. At the time of war, when foreign assistance stopped, these industries delivered the goods. What more proof one could ask for?

x x x

"Discipline counts in labour relations. In many countries we find that wage demands eat into the savings of the community. In our country, certain political leaders were exploiting labour for their own partiisan ends. Production suffered. The community was denied its legitimate share of savings and investment. Some of our actions have shown notable short-term results."

"It is the firmness and preparedness of the Government which has enabled the country to withstand foreign threat."

"In our system, who succeeds depends on how much party support he or she has. And the party will obviously support whoever is most likely to win the largest public support. No one would want her child to have the hardship and difficulties which a dedicated and sincere political worker has to endure."

x x x

"I am not a believer in the theory of sons of the soil. But it is obvious we do not want migration of the poorer sections of population from one area to another."

India did make certain mistakes in various fields in the past......We had foreign experts in the field of health, industry, science and so on and their advice had not proved wiser than those of our own experts.

THUS SPAKE THE MAHATMA

It is a first class human tragedy that people of the earth who claim to believe in the message of Jesus whom they describe as the Prince of Peace show little of that belief in actual practice. It is painful to see sincere Christian divines limiting the scope of Jesus' message to select individuals.

ASOKA SCENTED BETEL NUT POWDER

Free India

SUNDAY May 16, 1976

GUEST CONTROL

The guest control order has been relaxed with unusual haste.

The people of the state, all sections of them, have welcomed it. The initial resistance disappeared with in a short time. Marriages were getting more and more pleasanter as the guests " declined with thanks" to participate in feasts. Many middle class families heaved a sigh of relief.

We, in this country, have a marriage season limited to certain months. As all the marriages have to be celebrated within this time, there is a heavy demand for Kalyanamandapams. It is a problem to engage cooks. Prices of Commodities and vegetables and flowers rise to dizzy heights. The rich don't care; the poor suffer.

The Guest Control Order has brought about a discipline, even if the likely saving in foodstuffs is doubted.

This discipline is sure to facilitate registration of marriages—considered vital for family planning. This will help set up new standards in social life, closing the gulf between the rich and the poor.

Frequent changes in policies brought a bad name for the DMK Government. The new Government must be more careful in introducing new policies.

The Problems Of Rural Youth

By Lt. Gen. K.P. CANDETH

The term youth is applied to those between the ages of 15 and 25. According to this definition, there are about 90 million youths in this country of whom about 4 million are in schools and colleges. The vast majority of the remaining, numbering 86 million, resides in villages and the countryside and it is interesting to note that of this number about half are illiterate.

The importance of providing guidance and direction to youth is obvious and so needs no elaboration. Unless we provide legitimate outlets for the energies, aspiration and idealism of youth they will become disillusioned and frustrated with the society they live in, and turn to violence for a way-out.

In the words of that great visionary Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, "The tradition of millenia of our history surrounds us at every step. My own generation will join the procession and it will be for you, youngmen and women to be standard-bearers of all the good that we have left and for what we seek."

If we wish our youth to carry on the path that the pioneers of our freedom have blazed then we must involve them in the process of decision-making and imbue them in the process of decision-making and imbue them with these ideals and give them direction and guidance.

Thus the necessity for meaningful youth programmes take on a new and greater urgency. The Government is well aware of this and so like other developing countries we have been constantly increasing the scope, size and thrust of our youth programmes.

These in general aim at involving youth in nation-building activities making them aware of the social problems and evils that exist in our country, generating in them an urge to eradicate these evils, and to provide them with opportunities to learn skills, trades and thereby help them to obtain employment, and to bring to that vast segment of youth who are illiterate and live in our countryside the benefit of education and a better and more useful life.

WHY NEHRU KENDRAS ?

Youth can be divided into two main categories; student youth and non-student youth. In the past the emphasis has been on student youth as they were far more organised and vocal, and so, various schemes such as the NCC and NSS were started to cover them. However, the necessity to do something for non-student youth was increasingly becoming patent and this concern was voiced in Parliament and also felt by the Government.

The Government, therefore, started the Nehru Yuvak Kendras in 1972 to cater to the needs of non-students youth. As the majority of non-students live in the countryside, this programme has an overwhelmingly strong rural bias.

If we are to study the requirements of rural youth, the first necessity is to get a clear assessment of the characteristics of rural youth and in what manner he differs from youth brought up in urban areas.

In the first place rural youths live closer to nature and so are more aware of seasons, their effects on the life, are more accustomed to bear privation and hardship and so can do without many things that would be considersd necessities by urban youth, and are tougher. Their wants are less and so they are more easily satisfied. Moreover those who live in villages, live a communal life and are far more dependent on one another than those living in towns.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Therefore, there has always existed in rural India the practice of community service. In fact, the less touched they are by civilisation, the greater their dependence on each other and the stronger the realisation and practice of community service.

The tribal people, for instance, have strong traditions of community service and nearly all work that is required to be done is performed by the village as a whole, and in times of disaster or calamity to particular house or group of houses, it is not uncommon to see the whole of the village turn up to repair the damage or provide help.

The rural youth has very strong local loyalites and a fierce pride in his land, his community, local customs and culture. There is also no doubt that he is more conservative and less inclined to accept innovations. Years of suppression and brain washing by the higher castes have made the lower castes resigned to their fate and conditions. This state cannot be altered except by education of the youth and so the need for good, dedicated and socially oriented teachers cannot be over-emphasised.

HOW TO STOP THE MIGRATION?

We must also realise that however undeveloped our towns are, they still offer far more amenities than the villages. Moreover, opportunities of employment are practically non-existent in the villages and these are the two main reasons why they prefer to settle in towns rather than in countryside.

If we wish to reverse this trend, then we have no alternative but to improve the amenities in villages. We must provide better health centres, schools with better trained staff, water, electricity, better sewage system, roads and bus services, shops where the daily necessities can be bought, repair workshops where normal household and farm implements and items of daily use can be repaired and a better communication system. It is also essential that we provide adequate opportunities for cultural, physical and recreational activities so that the spare time that people have can be utilised usefully.

Further, we must provide employment to youth in or near his village. Unless this is done the youth will of necessity migrate to towns; In other words, if we desire to keep our rural population happy and satisfied, our first concern must be the uplift of the rural masses. Gandhiji realised the supreme importance of this task and that is why he identified himself with rural India and made Wardha Ashram his residence.

It is in order to provide rural youth with these facilities that the Nehru Yuvak Kendras(NYK) were set up in 1972. The programme of the NYKs can be divided into: Cultural : Music, dramas and debates: Educational: Functional literacy, Vocational training: Learning of trades; Physical: Sports and games.

HANDICAPS

At present, we have 91 effective Nehru Yuvak Kendras and it is intended to establish one Nehru Yuvak Kendra per district by the end of the Fifth Five Year Plan. In each district, the NYK has a co-ordinator who is to implement the youth programmes in the district.

The scheme, at present, suffers from the defect that the co-ordinater, a single man with little or no help, except a sports coach, cannot with the best will in the world go round the whole of his district, initiate plans, cajole the villagers into coming out of their shells and ensure that the various schemes and activities that he has initiated or planned are being implemented.

The result is that his influence is not being felt except in a few villages easily accessible to him. However, it is hoped that when the National Volunteers Scheme, which aims at providing opportunities to students to work in rural areas for a year after graduation comes into effect, a large number of them will be placed under the coordinator.

If this is done then he will have sufficient workers to enable him to take the various schemes the Government have initiated to the remotest villages. Further as these National Volunteers Scheme graduates will be

(Contd. on page 7)

20 POINT PROGRAMME : ACHIEVEMENTS SO — II

Abolition Of Bonded Labour

Abolition of bonded labour

A law abolishing bonded labour has already been enacted. Under the law, district officers are vested with appropriate powers relating to cognizance, enquiry and prosecution, so that these cases are disposed of expeditiously and are not bogged down in the normal methods of litigation. State Governments are taking necessary steps for implementation and village committees have already been set up in a number of States. So far about 20,000 bonded labourers have been freed.

States have been advised to design schemes for rehabilitation of bonded labour.

Plan for liquidation of rural indebtedness - legislation for moratorium on recovery of debt from landless labourers, small farmers and rural artisans

All States having the problem of rural indebtedness have imposed moratorium on recovery of debts from landless labourers, marginal and small farmers and rural artisans. The States of Haryana, Tripura and West Bengal have taken legislative action for removal of rural indebtedness i.e. moratorium, liquidation and scaling down of debts. Some States like Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Karnataka, Rajasthan and U.P. have taken action for moratorium and for total discharge of debts. Bihar also has taken steps for total discharge of debts

To provide for weaker sections with alternative sources of credit, States are gearing up co-operative institutions. In a number of States instructions have been issued providing that a certain percentage of loaning by co-operative institutions should be earmarked for weaker sections. Action for setting up Rural Bank is also being taken.

The question of alternative source of credit was considered at the Chief Ministers' Conference recently. A Group has been appointed specifically to look into this question and make recommendations.

Review of laws on minimum agricultural wages.

The States have reviewed minimum agricultural wages and in most States wages have been enhanced. Steps have also been taken to strengthen the administrative arrangements for implementation of minimum wages.

Five million more hectares to be brought under irrigation-National Programme for use of under-ground water. An accelerated power programme. Super thermal stations Under Central Control.

During the current year, allocation for irrigation and power schemes was increased by about Rs. 1000 million and additional Central assistance of Rs. 850 million was given to the States with a view to accelerate work on the irrigation and power projects which are in an advanced stage of construction. 2.05 million hectares of additional irrigation potential is expected to be created this year both from the major and medium irrigation projects and new minor irrigation schemes. An outlay of Rs. 20 50 million is envisaged for the irrigation and power sector during 1976-77.

Stress is being laid on utilisation of underground water. The Central Ground Water Board is going ahead with an ambitious programme to cover another 500,000 sq. kilometres of area in the country for systematic hydro-geological surveys during the Fifth Plan period. 100,000 sq. kms. will be covered during the current working season. During the preceding 25 years, the total area covered was only 1 million sq. kms. Surveys and investigations for irrigation in drought prone areas have been stepped up. A provision of Rs. 24.5 million has been approved for taking up necessary studies regarding inter-basin and inter-regional transfers of water.

Power generation continues to be substantially higher than in the corresponding period of last year. During 1975-76, generation was 12 per cent more than in 1974-75. Arrangements for implementing projects for super thermal power stations are being stations are being made. Four sites at Singrauli, Korba, Farakka, Neyveli have been identified.

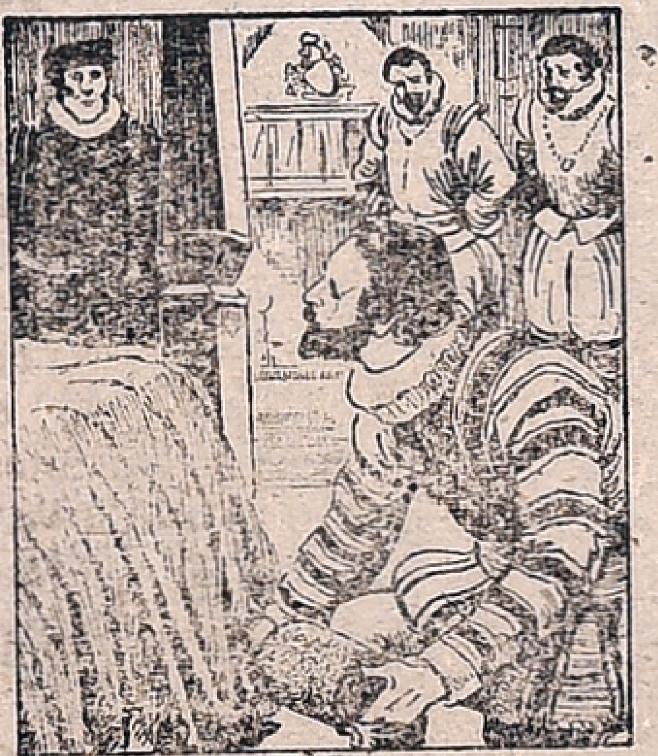
New development plan for development of handloom sector.

The Central Government provided loans totalling Rs. 47.2 million to clear the accumulated stocks of handloom. Further a subsidy of 10 per cent from the Centre along with a matching subsidy by the State was provided to lower prices and boost sales. Along side, a comprehensive programme for revitalisation and development of the handloom industry has been undertaken. The programme provides for extending coverage by co-operatives to 60 per cent. A Central scheme for setting up 13 intensive development projects at a cost of Rs. 18.5 million each, and 20 export promotion centres at a cost of Rs. 4 million each is being taken up. To ensure adequate supply of yarn to the weavers 1 6 million additional spindles have been licensed with the stipulation that 65% of the yarn produced will be in hank form. Limits for financing working capital requirements have also been raised and five more items have been reserved exclusively for the handloom sector.

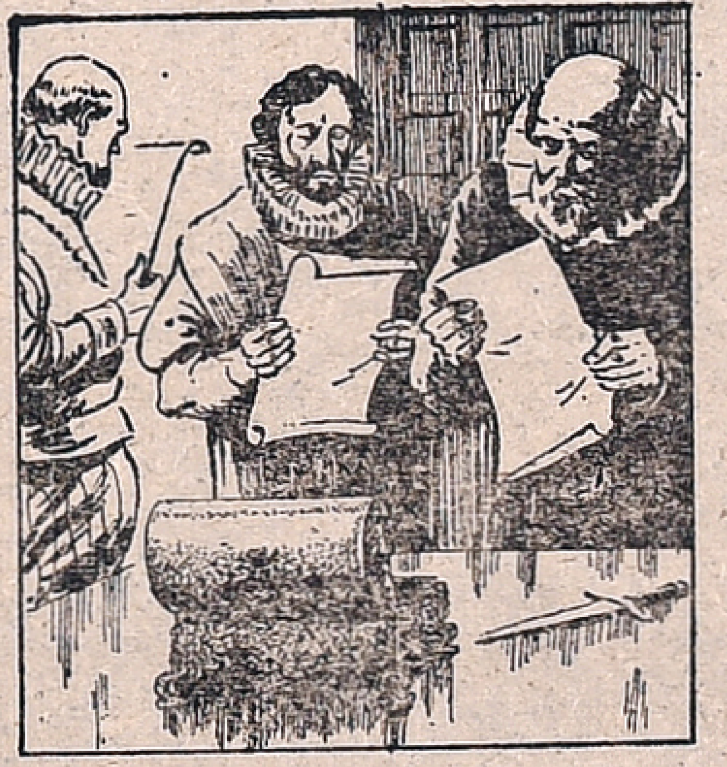
A Special Development Commissioner for handloom has been appointed to pay special attention to the implementation of the development programme.

(To be Continued)

Famous Mysteries — Who Wrote The Casket Letters ?



Too afraid to hold out any longer, George Dalgleish, erstwhile valet and accomplice of the Earl of Bothwell, led his captors to his room and kneeling down drew from underneath his bed a locked silver-gilt box, which he said he had taken from his master's room at Edinburgh Castle the previous day.



The silver casket, later to become so famous, was forced open the following June day in 1567, while the Earl of Morton and other peers crowded round. Inside they found some documents—two marriage contracts, some sonnets, and a series of letters from Mary, Queen of Scots, to Bothwell before their marriage.

The scandal of the Queen's marriage to Bothwell in May—after a sham trial which had exonerated him of the murder of her second husband Lord Darnley in February—had resulted in a rebellion among her nobles. Bothwell fled and the Queen was taken captive to Edinburgh, where hostile crowds taunted her cruelly.

She was moved from the capital to the island castle Lochleven and there, a few days after the discovery of the casket letter, sick and desperately afraid, she was bullied and threatened until she agreed to abdicate in favour of her baby son James and name her half-brother the Earl of Moray, Regent.

(Contd. on next page)

FUN AND LAUGHTER

THE ONLY REASON

A census taker went to Fanny Fiddle-croft...she's an old old-maid. She's never going to see fifty or sixty again. The census-taker said, "Name?" She said, "Fanny Fiddlecroft." He wrote that down. He said "Age?" She said, "Thirty." So he wrote down—Thirty—nationality Eskimo. She said, "What's the idea of writing Eskimo down there?! He said, 'Lady, if you're thirty, you must have lived at the North Pole where the days are six months long."

* * *

JUST IT

"What's the charge against this man?"

"Drink and disorderly", reported the cop. "He was fighting with a cab driver."

"Bring in the cab driver," ordered the judge.

"That's just it, your honour, there was no cab driver!"

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ALL ABOUT JOKES

When an Englishman is told a joke he laughs three times; first, to be polite; second, when the joke is explained; and third, when he catches on.

When a German is told a joke, he laughs twice; first, to be polite, and second, when the joke is explained. He doesn't catch on.

When a Frenchman is told a joke he laughs once he catches on immediately.

When an American is told a joke, he doesn't laugh at all; he's heard it before.

* * *

MORE THAN MERE!

A small boy returned home from school and told his father that he was second in his class. Top place was held by a girl.

"Surely, Johnny," said the father, "you're not going to be beaten by a mere girl.

"Well, you, see father," explained the boy, "I guess girls are not nearly as mere as they used to be."

* * *

CAT AND MOUSE!

A woman entered a grocery store and asked for a nice cake. "Here's a very nice one," said the clerk.

"Now, Mr. Needleman, I'm surprised at you," she replied "That cake looks like the mice have been eating it."

"Impossible," answered Mr. Needleman. "The cat was lying on it all night."

Dead Business!

Well Finnegan came to a fellow and he said, "Me dear friend Clancy has just died. They're gonna give him a funeral and I want a special eulogy for him. I know you're great on these eulogies. Out of my own pocket, I'll give you a hundred dollars, if you'll make this eulogy for him, because a wonderful eulogy will send him into the next world. You could say it your way—a wonderful eulogy for him. Here is the hundred dollars—right in advance."

The fellow said, "I'm awfully sorry. I am terribly busy: I'm awfully busy. I won't be able to give the eulogy for—well, for two weeks." Finnegan said, "What, two weeks? Gimme the money back. In two weeks, he'll be burned to a a crisp."

FOUND IT

This woman's surly spouse would sit for hours, without speaking, whenever he was the least bit miffed about something One evening after he had spent the day without a word to her, she lit a candle and walked round and round the room. All at once he growled: "What the devil are you looking for?"

"Your voice, Harold," she answered sweetly. "I'm so glad I found it."

PASSION FASHION!

A fellow came to work about ten O'clock, and when the office staff looked at him they all started to laugh. He asked. "What are you laughin' about?"

"There's a big black smudge on your face!"

"Oh," he said. "I can explain that. My wife was going on bacation and I took her to the depot and I kissed her goodvye."

'How about the smudge?" they asked.

"As soon as the train left, I ran up to kiss the engine!"

* * *

CLEVER HUBBY!

Old Tom had a good week and thought he would buy his wife a gift, so he picked up the table, carried it out of the house, put it on his head, and trotted down the road with it.

Old Bill Brown met him.

"'Allo Tom, are you moving?"

"No, it's the missus She says whenever I buy her anything it never fits."

"But why are you carrying the table?"

"I am going to the store to buy her a table cloth."

* * *

IMPATIENT LOVER

Montgomery came home one night and his wife Chuchu met him at the door and kissed him. He said. "What's going on? The house is all lit up—music playing, people here, what's happening?"

"It's a surprise," replied Chuchu, "it's your birthday we're celebrating."

"My birthday?" asked Montgomery. "This is December and my birthday is not until next October."

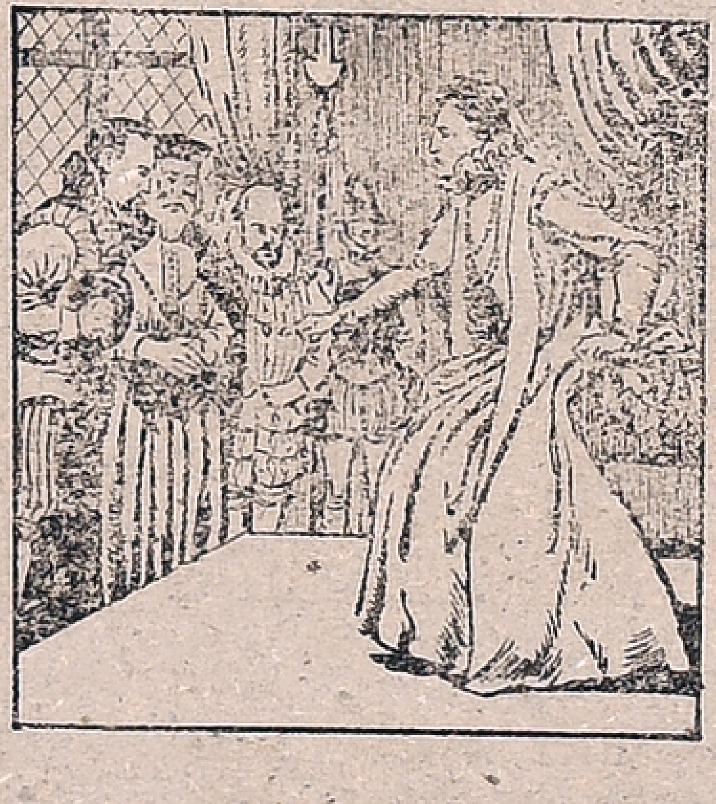
"So, why wait till the last minute!"

From previous page

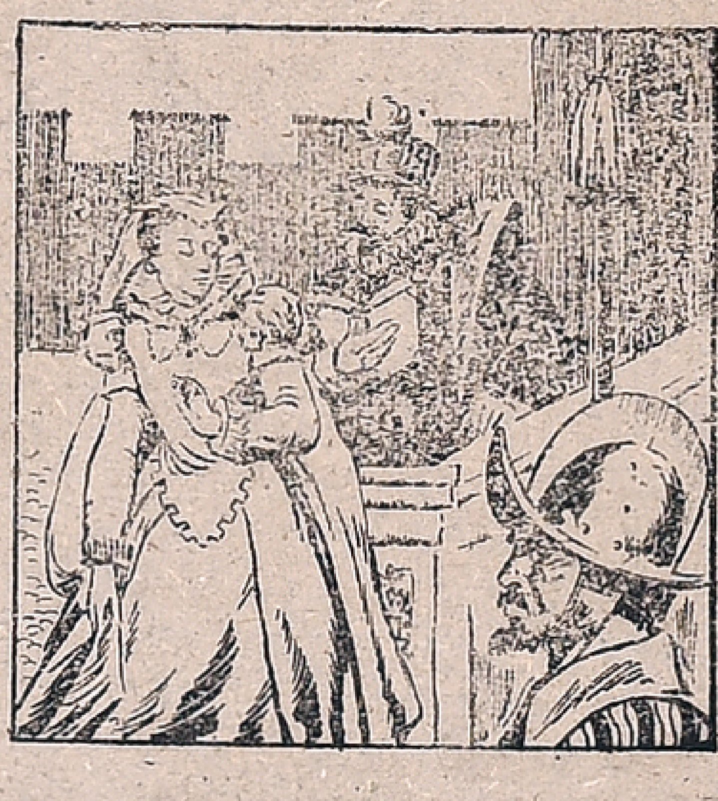
Famous Mysteries

The Queen gradually recovered her health and spirits and two young members of the guardian Douglas family, captivated by her charm, helped plot her escape. The first attempt failed when the boatman's suspicions were aroused by the beautiful white hands of the "laundress" as she put them across her face.

But in May 1568, disguised as a countrywoman, she was rowed to freedom across the loch and met by supporters. At one point during her flight south, she rode for 92 miles without a break, then unwisely sought refuge in England, where she hoped for a welcome from her cousin, Queen Elizabeth.



Elizabeth was not pleased to have her rival on English soil and needing a pretext to detain her gave instructions for a commission to investigate Mary's share in Darnley's murder. She repeatedly refused to allow Mary to come to London to put her case personally, and the two queens never met face to face.



While the beautiful tragic young Queen of the Scots fretted in confinement at Bolton Castle, occupying her time learning English from her custodian, Sir Francis Knollys and bedazzling him with her taking ways, the conference opened in York. The Casket Letters were first mentioned there and were shown secretly to the English Commission.

ON WINGS OF LOVE

By GHERMAN DROBIZ

The bell rang. I opened the door, and a perfect stranger, a young woman swiftly entered.

"I have thought over your proposal and in principle, I agree," she said. "Help me with my coat, please...Thank you. Not a bad flat, but only two rooms? At your age, you could well have acquired a three-room flat. Today there are two of us, but tomorrow there will be children, then what?"

She took down a book from the shelf and fell silent. I took advantage of the pause.

"My dear girl," I said, "you have no doubt come to the wrong apartment."

She put the book back and her face flushed crimson.

"Only don't try and say that you're seeing me for the first time."

"And how many times has it been?" I inquired with genuine perplexity.

"This is the second time."

"Sorry, I can't remember".

"Well, listen, my sweet... ..." She opened an elegant white handbag and plunged her hand in.

"A pistol!" flashed through my mind.

"The day before yesterday, at 5.30 p.m.," she rapped out each syllable, "you gave me your seat on the number seven trolley-bus. Then you got me this ticket. Then helped me off the bus and asked me to marry you. I seriously considered your proposal and decided to accept."

"Marriage..." I mumbled, "I recollect now that we did indeed travel on the same trolley-bus. But I don't remember anything else. I swear."

"Just what I expected." With a foot shod in a slim suede shoe she hooked out a chair. 'Sit down."

I sat.

"Smoke."

I lit a cigarette.

"Let's start from the beginning. Where do you work?"

I told her.

"Do you get tired?" Her voice unexpectedly softened.

"In general, yes."

"So," she said meditatively. "So, you get on a trolley-bus, sit down, stretch out blissfully... I'm not distorting the facts?"

"No!"

'Stretch out your legs, intending to drowse...and suddenly give your seat up to a totally strange woman...Why? Did I ask you for a seat?"

"No."

"So you gave your seat up because of an inner compulsion?"

"Yes".

"Very good. That covers that. Let's proceed. Did I ask you to buy me a ticket?"

"No. But you were poking around in your purse for a long time and you couldn't find the right change and I happened to have lots of copper coins."

She wanted to say something, but I said:

"And a minute. Let me think ...I said: "Next time we're on the same bus you can buy the tickets."

"Right. That means you intended to travel with me more than once. Now let's move on to the main thing. What happened at the exit? Only don't lie."

"I helped you to disembark."

"And what did you say as you were doing that?"

"I don't remember. I think I said 'Permit me to give you a hand.'"

"A little more accurately."

"Hum...I said: 'May I offer you my hand?'"

"That's right. That's exactly what you said." She stroked my hand, that same hand which I had rashly offered her the day before yesterday. "So, let's add it up. Three times I didn't ask you for anything and three times you did something for me. And then those words about your hand..."

I kept quiet.

When I rushed in, you probably thought I was crazy,' she said with a smile. "Silly, I was flying on wings of love."

A means of extriction popped into my mind.

"Understand," I said, "I'm not repudiating my words. But the fact is, yesterday I gave my seat in the trolley-bus to another woman. And today I helped a young woman find her way to the railway station."

No sooner had I said that then my 'fiance' leaned across the table, screamed: "So you're a Don Juan!" and gave me a resounding slap.

"However," she said, "so be it, before the wedding I give you permission to play the fool. But afterwards don't you dare to insult the mummy of your child!"

"Mummy! What do you mean?"

"It seems to me I've made it quite clear," she said tenderly. "We're going to have a child. A family without children is not a family."

"But...But in the trolley-bus nothing happened that could..." I timidly observed.

"Silly," she whispered with shattering tenderness, 'It's not done in the trolley-bus," and she kissed me hard on the mouth.

I resisted no longer.

Accurate Calculations

Ivan Krylov (1769 1844), the famous Russian fabulist, was of an extremely phlegmatic temperament. One day some friends visited him and were horrified to see that Krylov was lying on a divan directly beneath a picture in a heavy frame that was badly tilted and in imminent danger of crashing down.

"You must call someone in and have that picture nailed up properly,' said one of his friends

"There's no need," the fabulist replied calmly. 'I have mentally calculated the route it will take in falling and am certain that it will bypass my head."

THE FAMOUS ASTROLOGER

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Who Wrote The Casket Letters?

If these extraordinary and incomprehensible eight letters were genuine then without doubt Mary was guilty and possionately in love with Bothwell while still married to Darnley. The first letter appears to refer to her cossetting the sick Darnley while conniving to get him to travel and so fail into Bothwell's evil trap.

But historians point out that the words "from Glasgow this Saturday morning" could easily have been added by some unknown hand and the letter really have been written from Stirling Castle "The man' whom she is nursing and who "loves" her could be her infant son. Darnley's name is never mentioned.

The second letter, long and rambling, indicates a jealous woman who talks of making a bracelet for Bothwell—an improbable pastime for Mary in the midst of all the intrigues of travelling. Bothwell was undoubtedly a ladies' man. Was some other woman's love letter amalgamated in it?

It is unlikely Bothwell would have kept such an incriminating letter but such speculations were not brought up at the inconclusive York commission nor the second "trial" at Westminster. There the Earl of Moray, his sister's accuser, exhibited the casket and its contents publicly for the first time. Again Mary was not permitted to face her accusers.

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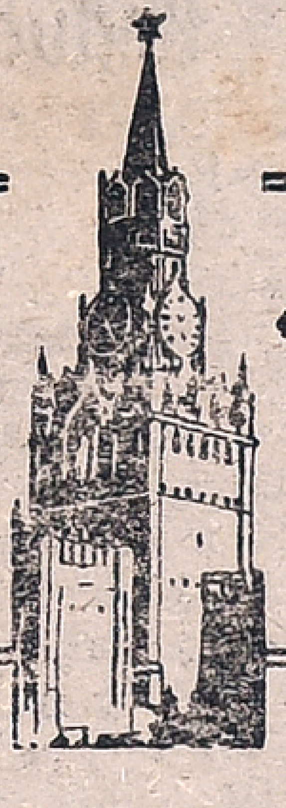


Muscovite's Diary

Ivan Ivanov

MORE COMFORTABLE FLATS

Soviet architects have designed new type of flats to Muscovites.

Before suggesting new designs of dwelling houses specialists analysed the results of a survey of about 90,000 families. They also studied demography and defined to some extent the composition of population in the 80s. As a result of these studies, the main principles of layout was determined. Along with the guidelines of the Master Plan for the development of Moscow in the field of housing construction, it incorporates the wishes of people expressed in the pages of metropolitan newspapers during the discussion on the Moscow flat of the future.

In the new flats, electric stoves will fully replace gas stoves. Adjacent to the 5-metre kitchen is a 8 10 metre dining room separated from the former by a light extensible wall.

After the dining room comes the drawing room. Spacious and not crowded with furniture, the drawing room will be used for family festivities, children's celebrations and business meetings. Its position may be the most diverse, but, as a rule, it will be the centre of the flat. To the left and right will be sleeping rooms and the toilet and bath unit.

There are several variants of the layout. One of them, for example, is for a family with two or three small children. The centre of the flat will be the room for games so that it will be easy for the mother to watch her children.

There are flats designed for two couples of different ages. Their feature is the isolated sleeping zones with separate entrances to the kitchen and the dining room.

And more. All of them will have a ventilation system based on natural draft. A maximum of natural light is envisaged throughout the flat, including auxiliary premises.

The new designs of dwelling houses will not mean an increase in the rents.

Although the development of new designs and the raising of the quality of building required and require considerable expenditures, rent has remained constant since 1928. It constitutes approximately three per cent of the family budget and covers only one-third of housing maintenance cost. The rest is bourne by the state.

THE OSTRICHES OF SIBERIA

Recent finds of shells of prehistoric ostrich eggs have now been pieced together to make one complete egg and half of another. Similar finds have frequently been made east of Lake Baikal, but never before in sufficient quantities to give an idea of the size of the egg. The reconstructed one is obout 7½ inches long, 6½ inches across, and about a twelfth of an inch thick.

Another interesting thing is that the shells were found near the remains of a dwelling of primitive man, some 40,000–30,000 years ago.

The ostrich probably died out in the area during one of the great cold spells.

THE SHAWL IN THE EGG SHELL

Over 200 years ago, in 1770, a lovely shawl was brought to Moscow all the way from Orenburg, on the River Ural, and the merchants marveiled at its glistening, snowy whiteness. It was hand-knitted, eight-foot square, but could be passed through a wedding ring or folded away in an egg-shell.

The maker of it, a Russian woman named Rychkova was presented with the gold medal of the Russian Free Economic Society, its highest award. About a century later, a Cossack woman, Uskova, made a "shawl of goat's wool" which won a medal in London, and thereafter Orenburg shawls became famous all over the world.

Today they are knitted by some 4,000 women in 120 villages in Orenburg region, working at home with spinning wheel, needles and wool. Usually all the womenfolk in the family knit yet no two shawls are ever exactly alike. It takes about 250 hours to knit an Orenburg shawl, but nobody has ever suggested they should be machine knitted. They couldn't be: each is a unique creation.

A Little Cloud

A little cloud floated high above the ground. An engine-driver noticed it and smiled: "Miraculous! That little cloud looks just like the smoke from a locomotive."

"Oh no!" The baker was astonished. "Can't you see that it resembles a big bun?!"

"You're both wrong," said a passing shoe-maker, interrupting their conversation, "it looks like a boot."

The engine-driver, baker and shoemaker all loved their work and each saw in the passing little cloud something of his own profession. And only the lazy fellow was not amazed at anything.

From previous page

Famous Mysteries — Who Wrote The Casket Letters?

Copies of the originals were made with English translations from the French, Mary's mother tongue. A later letter indicates Mary was party to her "abduction" by Bothwell six weeks after Darnley's death almost making their marriage imperative after his divorce from Lady Bothwell.

Arguments regarding the truth of these letters, all undated and unsigned, have gone on for centuries. History has only Morton's word for how they were discovered, and that they were not tampered with. Certainly it would not have been difficult for an expert forger to counterfeit Mary's italic hand.

Mary herself was never shown the letters, which Moray took back to Scotland. There they were preserved until they came into the possession of Mary's 18-year old King James VI, whom she had not seen since he was a 10-month-old baby. The documents were never seen again, although the casket is still on display in a Scottish museum.

The second "trial" also produced no definite conclusion, making it convenient for Elizabeth to keep Mary in captivity. And so she remained for 18 more years, whiling away her time with exquisite embroidery, until at another more famous trial she was found guilty of conspiracy and condemned to death. —END.

NEXT WEEK :—THE "FLYING DUCHESS".

From page 2

The Problems of Rural Youth

staying in villages, their impact on the villages will be far greater and they will be able to oversee progress of the schemes.

The Nehru Yuvak Kendra Co-ordinator does not have money at his disposal, nor does he need it, for his task is to see that the various schemes that the Central and State Governments have started are implemented. He is thus a catalytic agent who enthuses the youth in the rural areas and sees that the various opportunities available are utilised to the full.

There is no lack of enthusiasm amongst youth and they are eager to take advantage of the opportunities given to them. The requirement of youth varies from State to State and sometimes from district to district within a State.

For instance, in Kerala where there is widespread unemployment and a high degree of education even in rural areas, the accent is on vocational training and self-employment schemes, whereas in prosperous Punjab the stress is on physical education, sports and games. The coordinator must therefore cater to the special needs of the youth in the area he serves.

POTENTIAL FOR GROWTH

That the rural youth are eager to avail themselves of the new opportunities which are being provided can be seen from the success of rural sports which were organised by the National Institute of Sports at Patiala in 1971. At present, the total involvement is in the order of 75 lakhs and the number that compete at national level is 2,000.

The boys and girls have shown much talent as is evident from the fact that the winning team of boys hockey in 1974 which was entered in the Jawaharlal Nehru Open Tournament emerged as runners-up to the Border Security Force. Rural youth have shown equal talent in swimming, basket ball, kabbadi, etc. In order to encourage the youth showing talent in games and sports they are given scholarships of Rs 600 per year.

Rural youth are not less intelligent than town youth. For various reasons, they are slower to learn but it is my experience in the army that once they learn something they retain it better. The army each year takes in thousands of youngsters from rural areas and turns them into skilled craftsmen. So the talent is there what is required are the infrastructure facilities to bring out the skills and talents that lie within.

STRESS ON VOCATIONAL TRAINING

This is what the Nehru Yuvak Kendra sets out to do. It is of the utmost importance that vocational training is given to youth so as to improve the skill already existing or to train them in new skills. Similarly, in a society which is largely agricultural the education should be functional so that young farmers learn the means by which they can improve production. This in turn will make them more prosperous and thereby raise the standard of living in our rural areas.

One of the greatest needs is to ensure that sufficient opportunities of employment exist in villages. It may not be possible to provide job opportunities of all kinds in every village. Where the size of the village makes it uneconomical to establish a centre, a group of villages should be taken together and all trades and amenities provided in the "master village" which can serve as a shopping-cum-work centre for its satellite villages.

The Ministry of Agriculture has the organisation network in in the shape of Gram Sevaks which stretches down to the remotest village. It has also established, 1,00,000 Yuvak Mandals and 55,000 Mahila Mandals.

Many of them are not functioning but it is hoped that with the advent of the N. Y. K. these clubs will be revived in the shape of youth clubs and these will play a large part in vitalising the youth in our rural areas and supplying them with a long-felt need; a place where they can congregate, exchange views, stage shows, read and take part in games.

These clubs if run properly should in time become the nerve centres of youth activity in villages. Furthermore, the existence of these clubs will help to break down the restrictions and barriers of caste and creed and thus lead to rural national integration.

Finally, it must be borne in mind that more than 80 per cent of our population lives in rural areas and so there will be no real progress unless we make the rural areas more prosperous and the rural people contented and happy, and this can only be done if more attention is paid to the requirements and needs of rural youth.

Persona Non Grata

The South African authorities have refused an entry visa to Boris Moumbaris. Perhaps they fear that he may engage in some undesirable activities or make some undesirable statement. The visa was requested to enable Boris to see his father who is serving a twelve-year sentence for alleged complicity in "conspiracy against South Africa," as the racists call the patriots' fight for national liberation and democracy. The persons non grata is-four years old.

New Method Developed For Reducing Rat Damage To Crops

A promising new technique has been developed for coping with one of man's most persistent problems—the rats that infest fields and devour crops before they are even harvested.

The U.S. Agency for International Development announced recently that after eight years of work researchers have arrived at a method that can sharply reduce rat damage to rice paddles and boost yields and income for individual farmers.

Rice farmers using the new control method have been able to increase their yields at harvest by as much as 50 per cent, and in some cases have nearly tripled their profits.

The method is simple and inexpensive and available to small farmers. It differs from the majority of past approaches to rat control by stressing protection of the farmer's crop rather than elimination of the rat population.

The new method works this way: A farmer places bait stations in his fields, constructed of readily available materials such as old tin cans or coconut husks. The bait is polished rice, which rats prefer to the plants growing in the field. The bait rice is treated with a slow-acting anti-coagulant which interferes with the natural blood clotting mechanism in the rat and causes death after three or four days of repeated feeding. The rat bleeds to death because the anti-coagulant prevents the clotting mechanism from protecting the animal against the small cracks and breaks that occur continuously in the circulatory systems of all animals.

The bait stations are refilled every two or three days, and more stations put out if necessary to ensure that the bait rice is available at all times during the period when the rice plants are vulnerable.

The method protects the rice crop in two ways: It reduces the rat population temporarily during the time when the rice plants are growing, and it draws the rats away from the plants and to the polished riee that is used for bait.

A special advantage of this method is tha it works even if neighbouring farmers are not doing anything to control rats. This is considered a major selling point of the method, because of the obvious difficulties that would be encountered if all fields in an area had to be treated at the same time. It makes it much easier to persuade an individual farmer to put the new method to use, because he can be shown that it will work for him even if his neighbours do not cooperate.

Use of the new control method is planned during the current rice growing season in the Philippines. The control method also is being tested in a large-scale agricultural development project in Indonesia. The emphasis in this new research, as in the work thus far with rice, will be on protecting the plants during the period when they are vulnerable, and not just on killing large numbers of rats.

Repaid In Kind

(From the Folk Legends About the 16th Century Tajik Poet Mushfiki)

The Emir was constantly irritated by Mushfiki's wit and so decided to get rid of the poet. One winter night, barefoot and without his clothes, the poet was locked up in a tower in Bukhara, where he was bound to die of cold.

But Musefiki didn't freeze. He picked up a heavy stone and kept warm by running up and down the staircase of the tower with it, all night long. And in the morning, when he was found alive and well, the Emir, puzzled beyond belief, asked him:

"Tell me, Mushfiki, what kept you warm right through the night?

"A little flame flickering two or three versts away, as I was praying right at the top of the tower in the expectation of death.

"So that's it!" the Emir concluded. "Of course the heat of that flame kept you warm!"

Some time later the Emir, on his way back from a hunt and feeling thirsty, rode up to a house to quench his thirst with a cup of tea. It happened to be Mushfiki's house.

The host, having seated his guest on the terrace, went off into the garden and didn't return for a long time. The Emir lost his patience and set off in search of him. In the depths of the garden, Mushfiki was sitting quietly by a fire laid at the bottom of a poplar tree, keeping an eye on the kettle slung from the very top of the tree.

"Are you in your right mind, Mushfiki?" the Emir was outraged. "What sort of stupidity is this?"

"Your Excellency," replied Mushfiki, "if I myself could keep warm from a flame a few versts away, why shouldn't a kettle hung from the top of a tree boil from the heat of a fire laid at the bottom of the tree?"

Pollution

A reform group in Pretoria (South Africa) recently announced plans for a huge bonfire to destroy pornographic literature. The City Council, however opposed it on the grounds that the bonfire would cause pollution.

Film News And Reviews

American Fiction Film Festival

Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, Vice President, Sahitya Academy, inaugurated an American Fiction Film Festival at the American Cultural Centre, Madras, on May 10.

Dr. C. W. La Salle, Deputy Director, U. S. Information Service, welcomed the invitees.

This film festival is organised by the U.S.I.S. Madras.

Four short stories and two novels written by great American authors are to be shown at the Festival from May 11 to 21.

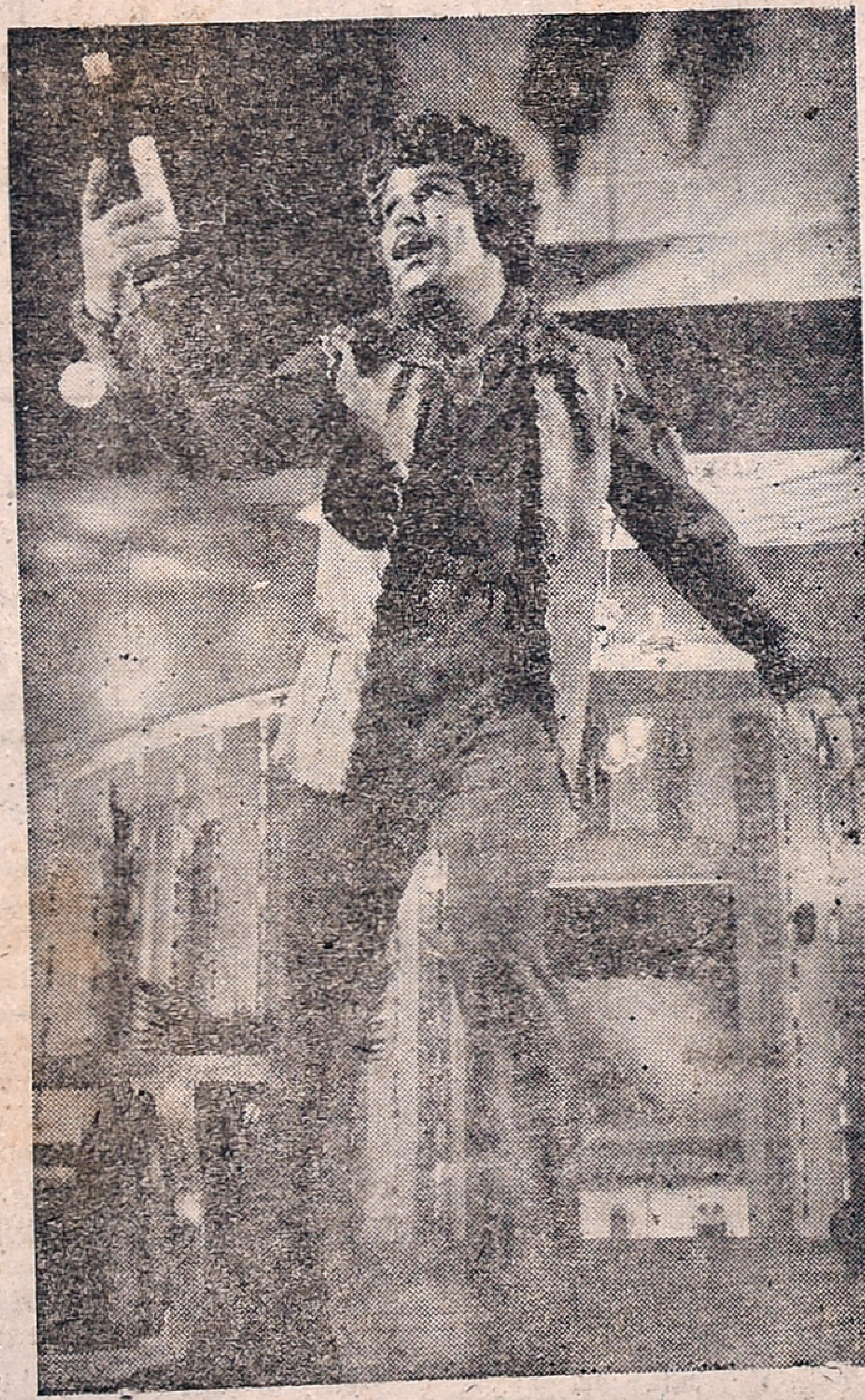
The short Stories are: Bartley by by Herman Melville; My Old Man by Earnest Hemingway; Lady or the Tiger by Frank Stockton and Dr. Heidegger's Experiment by Nathaniel Hawthorne. These were produced for Encylopedia Britanica's shot story show case.

THE NOVELS

The Heiress is an adaptation of Henry Jame's novel "Washington Square". The film directed by William Wyler features Montgomery Clift, Sir Ralph Richardson and Miriam Hopkins with Olivia D. Havil land who won the Academy award for her best acting in the film.

Moby Dick by Herman Melville has been adapted for film at least three times. The present version has screen play by Ray Bradbury and John Huston. Gregory Peck is Captain Ahab in this version directed by John Huston. Richard Baschart, Orson Welles, Leo Genn and Harry Andrews play other roles.

Sivaji Ganesan and Vanisri in the film "Ilaya Thalaimurai" produced by G. K. Dharmarajan for his Yoga Chitra.



Jaishankar as he appears in P. V. T. Pictures' "Thunive Thunai" directed by S. P. Muthuraman.

Sathyam

Sakthi Nataka Sabha's successful stage play "Vidhi" has come to the screen with the title "Sathyam", suitably adapted to the film media. S.A. Kannan who produced and directed it on the stage has directed the film version also.

It deals with the family of Darmalingam, the vi[illegible] headman, who would l[illegible]nything to keep his promise. [illegible] a battle of wits to keep up [illegible] promise to marry his brother to the village's rich estates' heiress, Gowri, he loses his peace, his dear brother and ever ebullient Vani, his brother's fiance. And his promise is kept up.

Sivaji Ganesan as Dharmalingam has given a good performance. Devika as his wife is adequate. Manjula and Kamalahasan have done justice to their roles. M. N. Nambiar, V.K. Ramaswami and Nagesh provide the comical interlude.

Jayachitra, as the ebullient, talkative, playful and dreaming Vani, is singularly striking. Hers is a sterling performance.

The director has taken the story on the beaten path.

K.S. Prasada Rao's captivating colour photography and 'Vietnam Veedu' Sundaram's original and powerful dialogue add lustre to this film produced by Sri Shanmugamani Films.

'Unmaye Un Vilai Enna?'

The price of Truth is high. One has to pay dearly for it. Many a time the price has been one's own life. And Father Arumainayagam pays that price in a bargain. This is, in a nut shell, the theme of Mohind Movies' "Unmaye Un Vilai Enna?".

It is the filmic adaptation of Cho's stage play of the same title. For the film also Cho has written the story and dialogue and has directed. On very many occasions Cho proves that he too is a commercial film director. The love sequenes and the club dance of Alam seem to have been introduced with an eye on the box office, which affect the tempo of the film.

Muthuraman, as Father Arumainayagam, has done extremely well. His role stands out as an example of how a Christian Father should live safeguarding truth and have faith in the Almighty.

Srikanth as the hippy son of the eccentric Lawyer is impressive. Padmapriya as his lady love has not much work. Manorama, Sukumari, Cho and Neelu provide the lighter vein.

Asokan again shows his talent as a matured character actor. A. Sakuntala and 'Thengai' Srinivasan have vital roles to play.

M. S. Viswanathan has composed the music.

Amirthayogam Inaugurated

Shooting of Chellapillayar Films' maiden venture was inaugurated on May 10, at the 10th floor of Vauhini Studios, Madras. Sivaji Ganesan switched on the camera in the presence of C. Muthukumaraswamy of Sri Gejavalli Pictures, Madras, when A.R. Srinivasan, Director, Midland Theatre, Madras, clapped the Muhurat shot clapstick.

Muthuraman and Sumitra are in the lead. Others in the cast are Vijayakumar, V.K. Ramaswami, 'Thengai' Srinivasan, R.S. Manohar, Senthamarai, Master Radhakrishnan, Sripriya, Sukumari and Manorama.

K.M. Balakrishnan will be directing the film produced by A. Ramakrishnan. Madurai Powrajan is writing the story and dialogue. Kannadasan will be providing the lyrics and M.S. Viswanathan is in charge of music direction.

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